

CLAIMS

I/we claim:

1. A tablet dispenser comprising:
 - a housing formed by first and second shells defining a cavity therebetween;
 - a blister tray configured to receive a plurality of tablets therein, the blister tray rotatably attached to the housing and moveable between a closed position in which the blister tray is releasably contained within the cavity, and an open position in which at least a portion of the blister tray extends out of the cavity; and
 - an alarm unit which activates at least one alert signal upon completion of a cycle period, wherein the alarm unit is reset after the blister tray is accessed to dispense at least one tablet.
2. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the alarm unit is reset by moving the blister tray to the open position and subsequently returning the blister tray to the closed position.
3. The tablet dispenser of claim 2 wherein the blister tray includes a switch projection which engages a timer reset contact on the alarm unit when the blister tray is in the closed position.
4. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein resetting the alarm unit deactivates the at least one alert signal until completion of another cycle period.
5. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the at least one alert signal is provided by an audible alert device.
6. The tablet dispenser of claim 5 wherein the audible alert device is a piezo-electric horn.
7. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the at least one alert signal is provided by a visual alert device.

8. The tablet dispenser of claim 7 wherein the visual alert device is an LED.
9. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the alarm unit simultaneously activates more than one alert signal upon completion of the cycle period.
10. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the alert signal is active for a predetermined period of time upon completion of the cycle period.
11. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the alarm unit terminates operation upon completion of a medication period.
12. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the alarm unit is formed using VLSI logic.
13. The tablet dispenser of claim 1 wherein the alarm unit includes a one-shot timer which defines the cycle period and wherein resetting the one shot timer resets the alarm unit.
14. The tablet dispenser of claim 13 wherein the alarm unit includes at least one activation timer activated by the one shot timer upon completion of the cycle period, the at least one activation timer activating at least one of the alert signals for an activation period.
15. The tablet dispenser of claim 14 wherein the at least one activation timer is connected to at least one short interval timer, the at least one short interval timer providing a pulse signal which produces at least one of the alert signals for the activation period corresponding to the at least one activation timer to which the at least one short interval timer is connected.
16. A tablet dispenser comprising:
 - a housing formed by first and second shells defining a cavity therebetween, the cavity configured for receiving one or more tablets therein, the second shell being rotatably attached to the first shell and moveable between an open position in which at least a portion of the cavity is accessible and a closed position in which the second shell closes the cavity and is releasably secured to the first shell; and

an alarm unit which activates at least one alert signal upon completion of a cycle period, wherein the alarm unit is reset after the cavity is accessed to dispense at least one tablet.

17. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alarm unit is reset by moving the second shell to the open position and subsequently returning the second shell to the closed position.

18. The tablet dispenser of claim 17 wherein the second shell includes a foot which engages a timer reset contact on the alarm unit when the blister tray is in the closed position.

19. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein resetting the alarm unit deactivates the at least one alert signal until completion of another cycle period.

20. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alert signal is provided by an audible alert device.

21. The tablet dispenser of claim 20 wherein the audible alert device is a piezo-electric horn.

22. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the at least one alert signal is provided by a visual alert device.

23. The tablet dispenser of claim 22 wherein the visual alert device is an LED.

24. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alarm unit simultaneously activates more than one alert signal upon completion of the cycle period.

25. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alert signal is active for a predetermined period of time upon completion of the cycle period.

26. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alarm unit terminates operation upon completion of a medication period.

27. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alarm unit is formed using VLSI logic.
28. The tablet dispenser of claim 16 wherein the alarm unit includes a one-shot timer which defines the cycle period and wherein resetting the one shot timer resets the alarm unit.
29. The tablet dispenser of claim 28 wherein the alarm unit includes at least one activation timer activated by the one shot timer upon completion of the cycle period, the at least one activation timer activating at least one of the alert signals for an activation period.
30. The tablet dispenser of claim 29 wherein the at least one activation timer is connected to at least one short interval timer, the at least one short interval timer providing a pulse signal which produces at least one of the alert signals for the activation period corresponding to the at least one activation timer to which the at least one short interval timer is connected.
31. A method of dispensing one or more tablets from a tablet dispenser having a housing with a cavity for receiving a blister tray therein, the blister tray being rotatably attached to the housing, the method comprising:
- (a) storing the tablets in the blister tray;
 - (b) releasably closing the blister tray within the cavity;
 - (c) setting an alarm unit for a cycle period corresponding to the time between prescribed doses of the tablets;
 - (d) activating at least one alert signal upon completion of the cycle period;
 - (e) accessing the blister tray to dispense at least one tablet;
 - (f) resetting the alarm unit for the cycle period; and
 - (g) repeating steps (d) through (f) for a medication period.
32. The method of claim 31 wherein step (e) further comprises at least partially removing the blister tray from the cavity and subsequently re-closing the blister tray within the cavity.

33. The method of claim 31 wherein the at least one alert signal in step (d) is provided by an audible alert device.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein the audible alert device is a piezo-electric horn.

35. The method of claim 31 wherein the at least one alert signal in step (d) is provided by a visual alert device.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein the visual alert device is an LED.

37. The method of claim 31 wherein step (c) includes setting a one shot timer for the cycle period and step (f) includes resetting the one shot timer.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein step (d) includes activating at least one activation timer with the one shot timer upon completion of the cycle period, the at least one activation timer activating the at least one alert signal for an activation period corresponding to the duration of the at least one alert signal.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein step (d) includes providing at least one pulse signal which produces the at least one alert signal for the activation period, the at least one pulse signal corresponding to the frequency of the at least one alert signal.